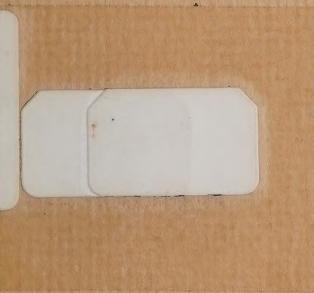


# *This House With Glory*



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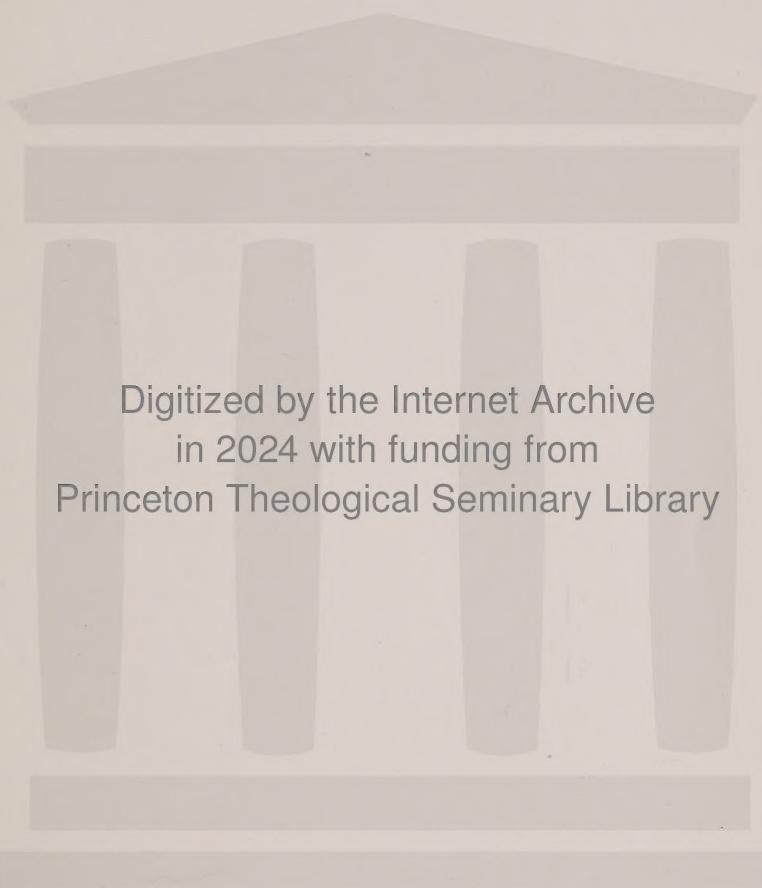
Rutgers Presbyterian Church

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Bogardus, Don.

This house with glory







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*This House With Glory*

**RUTGERS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
FOUNDED 1796**

THE PRESENT STRUCTURE WAS ERECTED  
TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND DEDICATED  
TO THE SERVICE OF THIS COMMUNITY

**1925**

EXCEPT THE LORD KEEP THE CITY  
THE WATCHMAN WAKETH BUT IN VAIN

THE CORNER STONE—The above date 1796 is in  
error and should read 1798



FROM DRAWING MADE BY HENRY OTIS CHAPMAN, ARCHITECT, 1925

*Rutgers Presbyterian Church and Church House*





# *This House With Glory*

A HISTORY OF  
Rutgers Presbyterian Church

*By DON<sup>V</sup> BOGARDUS*

RUTGERS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
236 West 73rd Street  
New York City

Copyright 1948  
RUTGERS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

## F O R E W O R D

*C*arlyle is reported to have said once that "all history is a Bible." When we see it in its broad sweep and learn, as Emerson put it, "to hear what the centuries have to say against the hours," it speaks an articulate language. Especially is this true of the deeds of the Church which by and large have been motivated with high purpose.

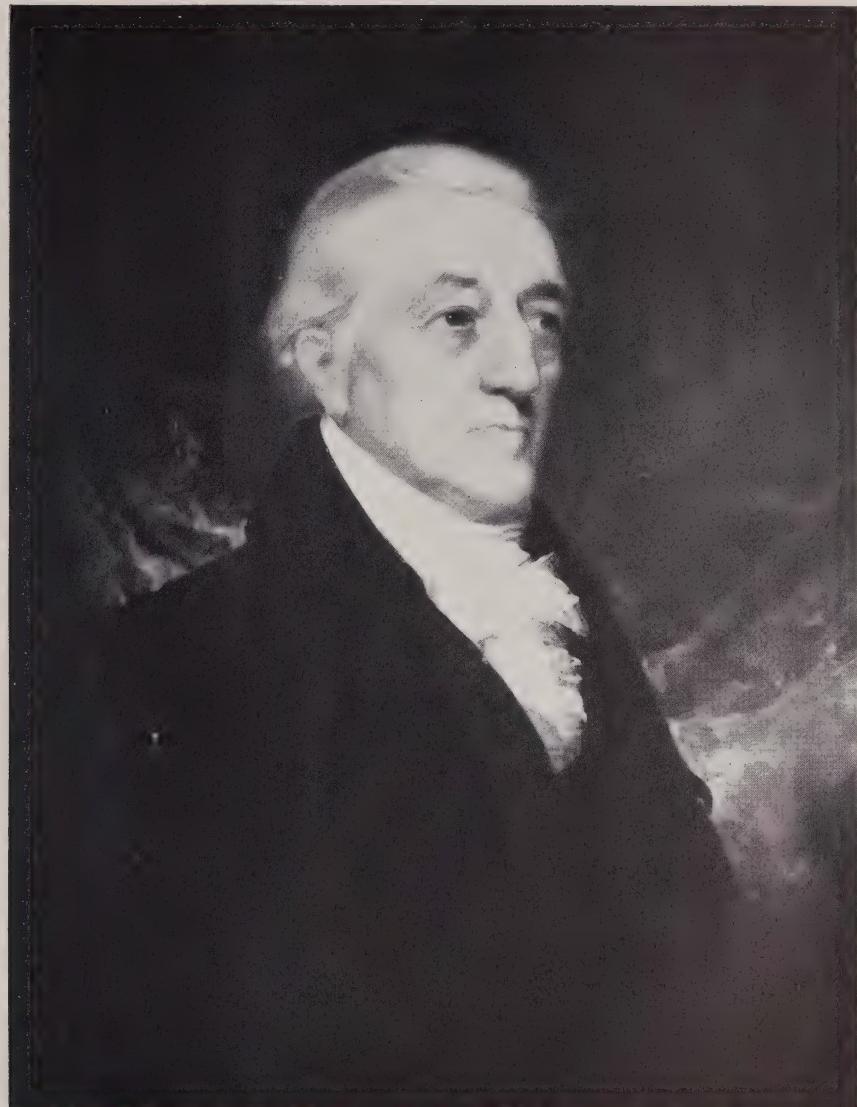
Our local church history goes back now one hundred and fifty years, a fact which gives opportunity to learn from its successes and failures what great lessons God would teach us for this day of difficult decisions. The account of it has been well written in this narrative with the clear intent of letting the facts speak for themselves.

Lights and shadows there have been in abundance, but the total picture is one of expanding glory. Dark periods invariably have been followed by some of the finest hours of sacrificial and devoted service. The whole story glows with an imperishable splendor that enhances the present and inspires to greater accomplishments as we face the future. Let us read it with a prayer that tomorrow in Rutgers will excel and therefore exalt still more its honored past.

*Ralph W. Key*

*We live in a day when our Christian culture is being attacked by various "isms" which deny the dignity of man and threaten human freedom. We must regard every church, therefore, as a fortification on freedom's battleline and as the protector of our homes and our culture.*

WILBUR LAROE, JR., LL.D.  
Moderator General Assembly, 1947-48



FROM OIL PAINTING IN RUTGERS UNIVERSITY CHAPEL BY HENRY INMAN, MOUNT HOLLY, N. J.  
COURTESY OF ROBERT C. CLOTHIER, PRESIDENT, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY.

### *Colonel Henry Rutgers*

Donor of the ground at Henry and Rutgers Streets on which the original  
Church was built and for whom the Church was named.

*The Christian view that is needed most of all is an affirmation of the Christian certainty that the future is with God, and that Jesus Christ and a reborn Church shall triumph in history;—In terms of a Biblical Vision, the glory of God must enter into the empty shrines of our churches, that a spiritual river may flow out to water the awesome wilderness of our time.*

JOHN A. MACKAY, D.D. PH.D.  
President, Princeton Theological Seminary

## Chapter I

# *This House With Glory*

A HISTORY OF  
RUTGERS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

By DON BOGARDUS

When we say that the history of Rutgers Church began in 1798 we are speaking the truth only if by "Rutgers" we mean the church building and the actual organization of the members. But was not the act of organizing itself a culmination of other events which made apparent the need for the organization? Obviously, these events had a direct bearing on the inception of Rutgers Church and, just as obviously, they must have taken place prior to Rutgers' beginning. Further, these prior events were themselves the effects of preceding causes. Thus we are carried backward in time.

However, there comes a point in this backward march when the trail becomes too faint or too tangled to follow. It is at this point that we may truthfully say, "Here, so far as we know, is the beginning of Rutgers Church history."

Thus, our starting point for this history would be the early days of Dutch Colonial New Amsterdam. As early as 1638 there were a number of Presbyterians in New Amsterdam, some of them driven there by intolerance and oppression in other parts of the country. They were not numerous, however, even after 1660, when a wave of immigration from Northern Ireland to America started. The newcomers were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who, for the most part, settled in New England or Maryland. Some of them filtered through to New Amsterdam but not in sufficient numbers to make their weight felt.

Since the Presbyterians in New Amsterdam at this time had no church of their own, they worshipped in borrowed Dutch Reformed churches. Even

this was denied them after the British took possession of the city in 1664 and it became New York. In 1693 the Church of England was established in New York as the official church. When the Presbyterian minister Francis Makemie was invited to preach in a Dutch church in 1706 the royal governor, Lord Cornbury, refused to permit it. Makemie, undaunted, preached in a private house but was arrested and brought to trial. An able defense won him an acquittal but he was forced to pay the costs of court procedure. In 1709 the tyrannical Cornbury was recalled and a more moderate attitude seems to have prevailed in the city.

The year 1713 saw the beginning of a second wave of Scotch-Irish immigration which lasted until just before the War for Independence. By 1716 there were enough Presbyterians in the city to warrant the formation of a church. Accordingly, a building was erected in Wall Street, the first Presbyterian church in the city.

Failure of grain crops in the Scotch-settled county of Ulster, Ireland, in 1726 and succeeding years greatly augmented the flow of Presbyterians to the New World and by 1730 there were thirty Presbyterian ministers in America.

Since 1705 a Presbytery had been meeting regularly in Philadelphia. A Synod was constituted in 1716 with four Presbyteries: Long Island, including New York, and, after 1738, eastern New Jersey; Philadelphia; New Castle, the Delaware Presbytery; and Snow Hill, which included Maryland and Virginia. In 1738, with authority of Synod, the Long Island and East Jersey Presbyteries were merged under the name of the Presbytery of New York. The Presbytery of New Brunswick was formed several months later. When the church split in 1741 on the question of evangelism, the Presbyteries of New York and New Brunswick established their own Synod, which increased from twenty-two members in 1745 to seventy-two in 1758, largely through its progressive spirit and enterprise in founding the College of New Jersey (now Princeton) in 1746 to train its ministers. In 1758 the two synods re-united as the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, thus consolidating the position of American Presbyterianism, which was to undergo many rigors during the Revolution.

The Presbyterians played a major part in the struggle for freedom from British rule. They had no love for the British crown, which to them meant only persecution and oppression. In addition they possessed that love of democracy which was, and still is, inherent in their church polity. Probably no other religious group fought more fiercely or with such unwavering devotion to the cause of Independence.

When the war ended, the Synod of New York and Philadelphia set out to recover the severe losses sustained during the war. In this task they had such success that in 1788 the synod divided itself into four synods which formed a General Assembly to serve as the supreme legislative, judicial and executive authority for the church. It is interesting to note that the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Rutgers Church coincides with the General Assembly's one hundred and sixtieth anniversary. In all these one hundred and sixty years, despite wars, economic disturbances and civil strife, the General Assembly has never failed to convene its annual session.



*Wilbur LaRoe, Jr., LL.D.*

Moderator 159th General Assembly Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

Mr. LaRoe is the fourth layman to be elected to this office and the first who was not professionally connected with religious work.

## Chapter II

In 1798 there were two Presbyterian churches in New York; the Wall Street Church and its connected organization, the Brick Church, which had been built in 1768 at the corner of Nassau and Beekman Streets. When Dr. John Rodgers, who had been a minister of the connected churches, returned to the City after serving as a chaplain with Washington's troops in the war, he found both churches unfit for use. The British forces occupying the city had used the Wall Street church as a barracks and the Brick church as a prison. Through the courtesy of the Episcopal Church, Dr. Rodgers preached to his congregation in the St. Paul's and St. George's chapels until the two Presbyterian churches were repaired.

Because of the rapid expansion that took place in New York shortly after the Revolution, the Presbyterians in the city soon felt the need of another church, and after some deliberation decided to erect one where the future growth of the city could be to its benefit. Accordingly, the offer by Colonel Henry Rutgers of a parcel of land at the corner of Henry and Rutgers Streets was accepted with gratitude.

It would be well for us to pause for a moment and consider this man whose name has identified our church for a century and a half. Henry Rutgers was born on October 7, 1745, the last direct descendant of Rutgers Jacobsen Van Schoenderwoert, who came from Holland to the New World in 1636. Henry's father, Hendrick Rutgers, was a wealthy farm-owner whose land was located on what was then the outskirts of the city, now known as the Chatham Square district.

The boy Henry grew to manhood on this farm during the stirring period before the Revolution. His sympathies lay entirely with those courageous colonists who defied the power of Britain and he was a member of the Sons of Liberty, an underground group that met frequently at the Rutgers farm. When the war started, Henry Rutgers immediately joined the rebels and rode away to battle. Through the long war years he fought with grim determination and when at last he came back to his home in New York he had risen to the rank of colonel. He was a man and a soldier of the highest type, one who had been tested and proved in war's flaming crucible.

Upon his return, Colonel Rutgers set about repairing the mold of his own life and doing what he could to help others repair theirs. As part of his

endeavor he made an offer, which stood during his lifetime, of free land to any church which would build on his property. It was this offer that was accepted by the Presbyterians under Dr. Rodgers.\* Some time later the church was named in honor of Colonel Rutgers, who was a member of it for some time prior to his death in 1830 at the advanced age of eighty-four.

A fund for the church building was raised by subscription and amounted to approximately \$5,000. In searching for a physical description of the building we find some discrepancies as to its size. Frederick Bruckbauer, in "The Kirk on Rutgers Farm," describes it as a frame building 36 by 64 feet, while Dr. Robert Russell Booth, in his discourse "The History of the Rutgers Riverside Church," gives the measurements as 85 by 65 feet and adds that it was surmounted by a cupola containing a public clock and a bell.

Whatever its size, the church was more than large enough for its membership, for it was located in what was then a rural area and there were few houses near it. No one could be expected to foresee the swift mushrooming of the city that was to take place within the next few decades. There were only 60,000 inhabitants on all of Manhattan Island when the church was built. These people lived a life so primitive that it is almost incredible to us who walk the same streets a century and a half later. Water from Collect Pond, long since filled in, was peddled to householders from horse-drawn carts or was piped through hollow logs to pumps on street corners. These were the only means by which water could be obtained for human consumption, as the well water was brackish and not fit to drink. Sewage ran down uncovered troughs in the middle of the streets and garbage and refuse of all kinds was dumped into the roadway or otherwise disposed of at the discretion of the householder. Coal, steam and illuminating gas were unknown and all cooking and heating were done by means of open fireplaces. There were only three

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\* Rutgers still has an interest in the land in this section. At a congregational meeting on November 15, 1911, a letter from A. E. Palmer, secretary of the New York City Board of Education, was read from which the following extract is taken:

"In connection with the centennial celebration of Public School No. 2, located at 16 Henry Street, the fact was emphasized that a portion of the site on which the school building stands (consisting of two lots) was given to the Public School Society late in the 18th century by Col. Henry Rutgers, and the deeds to said lots provide that if the said property should ever cease to be used for school purposes, it would revert to the Rutgers Street Presbyterian Church".

Rutgers Presbyterian Church is the legal successor to the Rutgers Street Presbyterian Church.

or four hospitals in the city and their inadequate facilities were overtaxed in the yellow fever plagues that swept the city at numerous intervals from 1798 to 1822.

Crude as was life during this period, the city's population mounted fantastically. From 33,000 in 1790 the number had almost doubled in a decade and would more than double in the next twenty years, reaching 123,000 in 1820.

This was New York at the time when Rutgers Presbyterian Church was formally opened for worship, May 13, 1798. Dr. Rodgers preached the dedicatory sermon from Haggai 2:7, "And I will fill this house with glory . . ." The number of people in attendance and other details of the Service are lost to us, but we may assume that the sermon was a good one, for Dr. Rodgers was an exceptionally able speaker.

At the time of its opening, and for eleven years after, Rutgers Church was integrated with the Brick and Wall Street Churches to form the Collegiate Presbyterian Church of New York. One Session and one Board of Trustees served for all three. Each church had its own minister, although apparently he was not assigned inflexibly to one church.

Dr. Rodgers, Dr. Miller and Dr. McKnight were the three pastors who served the Collegiate Churches at this time. In 1805, because of the venerable Dr. Rodgers' increasing infirmity and because it was becoming evident that the three churches eventually must be separated, the Rev. Philip Milledoler was called from the Third Church of Philadelphia to aid in the ministry. It was intended that the Rev. Philip Milledoler assume sole charge of the Church in Rutgers Street after the separation took place.

Early in 1809 a legislative act by Presbytery officially dissolved the union. On April 6th the three congregations met in the Wall Street Church and resolved to permit the Presbyterian Church in Rutgers Street to become a separate corporation with full ownership of the church and the ground on which it stood, as well as one third of a jointly-owned burial ground at the corner of Chrystie and Houston Streets.

In like manner, the Brick and Wall Street churches became separate entities at the same meeting. Dr. Rodgers continued as pastor of the Wall Street Church; Dr. Miller remained with the Brick Church; Dr. McKnight resigned; and the Rev. Milledoler took charge of the Rutgers Street Church.

At a congregational meeting of the last-named church, nine trustees were elected. They were: Henry Rutgers, Daniel Smith, Samuel Torbert, Benjamin

Thurston, Jonathan Cowdrey, James McMasters, Samuel Russell, John Beekman and Edward Gilbert. Henry Rutgers was chosen president of this original Board of Trustees.

By authority of Presbytery, at approximately the same time, a new Session was constituted with members coming from the general Session of the united congregation. The resolution effecting this act reads: "RESOLVED, that the Rev. Philip Milledoler, together with Henry Rutgers, Benjamin Thurston, Abraham Van Gelder, Jr., Ephraim Brasher, Daniel Smith, James McMasters, Samuel Torbert, and John Beekman, be and hereby are constituted a new Session for the Presbyterian Church in Rutgers Street, to hold their first meeting on Monday evening, the 8th of May, and afterwards on their own adjournment."

It is obvious, from the recurrence of Colonel Rutgers' name in the lists of officers, that he had been a member of the Presbyterian Church for some time, although there is no record of his transfer from the Dutch Reformed Church, of which he was a former member. That he was a close personal friend of the Rev. Mr. Milledoler is certain; it may have been this association which brought him into the Rutgers Street congregation. His friendship with Milledoler probably was what caused him to take a letter of dismission back to the Dutch Reformed Church in 1813, after Milledoler had resigned from the Rutgers Street pastorate to accept a call from that church.

Following Milledoler's resignation the church had no permanent minister until 1815 when Mr. Alexander McClelland, who later became Dr. McClelland, was ordained and installed. Dr. McClelland's ministry lasted until 1822, when the Rev. Thomas McAuley succeeded him.

A sincere and tireless worker, Dr. McAuley added 541 members to the congregation on confession of faith. Dr. Robert Russell Booth quotes Dr. Gilbert, a historian, as saying of him, "Rarely has anyone had occasion to rejoice over a more successful pastorate than Dr. McAuley while in charge of this church. Without being remarkably eloquent, he was a man of ready utterance, and from a mind richly stored with scriptural knowledge, and far from lacking in the lore of the scholar, he poured forth with the freshness and fervor of pastoral fidelity those expositions of truth which were at once instructive and edifying." Dr. McAuley left the service of the Rutgers Street Church in 1827 when he removed to Philadelphia. For the following two years the congregation could not unite in the choice of a pastor. Finally the choice fell upon the Rev. John A. Krebs, a newly-licensed minister, who accepted the call.

## Chapter III

No one who was present at Dr. Krebs' installation on November 12, 1830, could visualize the long successful pastorate just beginning. It was Dr. Krebs' first charge and he was to continue in it until the day of his death, September 30, 1867, establishing the longest period of service in the first century and a half of the church.

The rapid growth of the church, which had been so marked under Dr. McAuley, continued in Dr. Krebs' ministry, New York City was expanding northward and building went on apace. In 1830 the industries that were to make America a giant of power were in their first fumbling beginnings. Steam was being harnessed to drive ships and run machines, Stephenson's "Rocket," one of the first locomotives, was under construction, and Ohm and Farady were delving into the behavior of electrical currents. New York City was rapidly becoming a center of industry and already was a principal shipping port. The Erie Canal, completed five years before, lent a terrific impetus to the city's growth. Population figures had almost doubled in the decade just completed; 202,000 people lived on the island of Manhattan.

Living conditions at this time had improved but little since the beginning of the century. Sewage still ran down uncovered troughs in the street, the "rattle watch" police patrolled the streets at night only, and a debtor could be jailed for non-payment of a debt over twenty-five dollars. The fire department was entirely volunteer and in the great fire of 1835 in the area bounded by Wall and William Streets, Coenties Lane and Slip and the East River, 674 buildings were destroyed, including the Stock Exchange and the Post Office, for a loss of \$17,000,000, an astronomical figure for the times.

However, some progress had been made. An undenominational school system had been established in 1824 and primary schools with women teachers were instituted in 1827. The yellow fever plagues, which have already been referred to, were brought under control and eventually eliminated. New York authorities were attempting to work out a satisfactory water supply system but the water carts still traveled the streets, and in a case tried before the Session of Rutgers Church a woman stated during her testimony that she had been to the public well for water, indicating that the street-corner pumps still were in service.

By the year 1840, it became evident that with the larger population it

had to draw upon, Rutgers congregation had outgrown its original house of worship and in 1841 work was begun on a new stone building, larger than the old church.

There were 900 members in the church at this time, making it one of the largest, if not the largest, of the Presbyterian congregations in New York. Much hard work was necessary to keep up the obligations of the church to such a large number of adherents. Dr. Krebs was aided in this endless task by the church officers, particularly the Session, who maintained firm discipline.

In fact, it is evident from Session records that, until the last half of the century, the church supplemented, if it did not at times supplant, the city courts of justice. Any complaint against a member of the congregation was thoroughly investigated by a committee of Elders, who reported their findings at a Session meeting. If, after mature deliberation, Session decided that the evidence was sufficient to warrant a trial, the participants were notified to appear at a Session meeting where a trial was held.

A number of these cases are reported fully in the Session records. Many of them originated in minor infractions of church law, but several cases were of a graver nature. In one instance a case of alleged fraud that had been dragged through the civil courts was satisfactorily cleared up through the efforts of Session. In other cases potentially serious troubles were dissolved before they grew to unmanageable proportions.

The new church building which was erected in 1841 cost approximately \$30,000 when finished and completely furnished. It was a fine structure and was built to last for many years. However, a change was taking place in the neighborhood surrounding the church. Gradually at first, but with increasing acceleration as the years passed, the population of the vicinity changed. A protracted wave of immigration replaced the old residents with people of a different faith. Members of the Rutgers Street Church moved northward as the city grew in that direction until, by 1862, the congregation's numbers had fallen below 300.

In that year it was decided to sell the church building and move uptown. The sale of land and buildings was made to Alanson P. Briggs, who sold it for \$40,000 to the Roman Catholic Church, which still makes use of the property. That part of the cemetery at Chrystie and Houston Streets which was owned by the church was also sold and the proceeds added to the fund accruing from the sale of the church building.

The next step taken was to unite with the Madison Avenue Church, located at Madison Avenue and Twenty-ninth Street. Dr. William Barnard, the last pastor of that church, had resigned and gone upstate shortly before

New York Supreme Court  
City and County of New York

In the Matter of the Petition  
of

The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church  
in Rutgers Street in the City of New York,  
(a Religious Corporation in said City.)

On reading and filing the Petition of The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Rutgers Street in the City of New York, a Religious Corporation in said City, duly incorporated under that name and title, under and by virtue of the Act of the Legislature of the State of New York, entitled "An Act to provide for the incorporation of Religious Societies," passed March 27, 1801, which said Petition is verified by the affidavit of their President thereto annexed, by which I am satisfied that by reason of the change of the location and place of worship of the Petitioners, the name adopted by the Petitioners at the time of their incorporation, has become incongruous and inconvenient, and that their present location and character will be more correctly and effectually designated by changing the corporate name of the said Petitioners to that of "The Rutgers Presbyterian Church in the City of New York," and that such name has not been previously assumed by any other existing Religious Corporation.

Now, on motion of J.W.C. Leveridge of Counsel for

and in behalf of the said Petitioners, it is hereby ordered that the prayer of the said Petitioners be and the same is hereby granted, and on like motion, I do hereby order that the said Petitioners be and they are hereby authorized to change their corporate name, and that the said Petitioners bear and assume and be designated and known by the said corporate name of "The Rutgers Presbyterian Church in the City of New York" from and after the twenty second day of February 1871, in pursuance of the Statutes in such case made and provided.

Dated at the City of New York January 26, 1871.

J.W.C. Leveridge  
for Petitioners

John T. ...  
A Justice of the Supreme Court,  
residing in the City of New York.

Reproduced from photostatic copy of Petition to the New York Supreme Court to change the name of the church from Presbyterian Church in Rutgers Street to Rutgers Presbyterian Church in the City of New York.

and the church was without a minister until the union with Rutgers was consummated and Dr. Krebs took over the ministerial duties. Before the union was effected it was stipulated that the name of the new organization would be "The Rutgers Presbyterian Church."

For some time the church prospered. New homes were built in the neighborhood, the congregation grew, and in 1866 the church building and land were cleared of debt, at a cost of \$35,000. Shortly thereafter Dr. Krebs' health began to fail and on September 30, 1867, he passed away after more than thirty-six years of service to the church. Dr. Krebs had come to the church when it was young, he had watched it grow, then fade and almost wither, only to burgeon again until, at the time of his death, it was in the full tide of a new life. He left it, he may have thought, sound, secure, and permanently established.

And, truly, it seemed as though the church was there to stay. Following the Civil War, New York was going through another period of tremendous expansion. The city was not only growing out — 13,000 acres north of the Harlem River, now in the Borough of the Bronx, were incorporated into the city in 1874 —, it was maturing as well. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, organized in 1870, was constructing the building on Eighty Second Street we know now. General Ulysses S. Grant laid the cornerstone of the Museum of Natural History in 1874. The Bar Association of New York State came into being in 1870, a result of the exposure of the Tweed Ring's power over the city courts.

A full-time paid fire department had been functioning in the city since 1865 and a compulsory education law was passed in 1874, but remnants of old New York's crudities remained. There was no city department to clean the streets until 1881. The most modern lighting was by gas, and many houses were still lighted by candles, although electric lights had been in use for some years. Not until Thomas A. Edison's display in 1879 did incandescent lamps begin to replace older forms of lighting. In the ten years from 1860 to 1870 New York's population had grown from 813,000 to 942,000 and by 1880 reached 1,216,000.

New York was beginning to assume the stature of a first class city, and Rutgers Church was one of the foremost Presbyterian bodies in New York when the Rev. Nathaniel W. Conkling was called from the Arch Street Church in Philadelphia and installed as Dr. Krebs' successor in 1868. For the first several years of Dr. Conkling's stay the congregation continued to grow until it was thought necessary to tear down the small building and replace it with a structure commensurate with the size of the congregation.

One hundred and twenty thousand dollars was spent on the undertaking, the members worshipping in the lecture room of the Fourth Avenue Church while construction was going on. The new church was dedicated January 3, 1875. Almost immediately it became apparent that a mistake had been made; the church began to lose ground. There were many other fine churches in the vicinity and, again, the northward drift of the population subtracted many potential members from the total in the neighborhood. Despite the labors of Dr. Conkling and the church officers the church failed to hold its own. Mrs. J. C. Green, a member of the congregation, generously gave \$10,000. to help clear the church's debts, \$30,000. more was raised by the congregation and the debts were paid, but it was only a temporary gain; the church continued to decline. On May 1, 1881, Dr. Conkling resigned and many members of the church took their letters.

Rutgers Church was in a perilously low state when the remaining members of the congregation elected to call the Rev. William Stevenson to lead them. He was installed on November 1, 1881. Stevenson labored greatly to no avail to improve the standing of the church until his health was affected by the strain of the burden. Stevenson resigned his charge on May 1, 1884, and, after supplying the pulpit until the end of the year, the church officers and the congregation ordered the church closed, with the added recommendation that the building be sold and letters of dismission granted to the members.

*I urge and entreat you who have now entered into this heritage to make the new century a period of the triumphs of grace to the honor of God and His gospel. The Church of the future, if faithful, has the ingathering of vast harvests to look for. This Church has its share, which, with God's help may be won, far larger in the future than in the past.*

From "A Centennial Discourse" by  
ROBERT RUSSELL BOOTH, D.D., LL.D.

## Chapter IV

In the normal course of events, the decisions made by the congregation of Rutgers Church in 1885 would have meant the end of the church and the dispersion of its members. An inglorious end, surely, for a church that had survived through eighty-seven years and that had, at one time, the largest membership in New York City. Dr. Booth, in his centennial discourse on the history of Rutgers, puts the blame for this situation on an error of judgment that led to locating the church in a neighborhood where so many other churches already were established, but it would seem that the cause lay deeper.

Evidently, the officers of the church consistently failed to recognize the character of the city's growth. If they had, they would have realized that the lower part of the city had become a settling-place for a new wave of immigrants of a different faith. This new population grew, spread, and in effect forced the previous population to move north. The total population of the neighborhood in which the church was located remained steady but its character changed. When the church was at Henry and Rutgers Street the officers realized a similar condition only after the membership had dropped dangerously low. Then the church moved north, following the trend of Presbyterian population. The move was in the right direction but of insufficient distance; the neighborhood of Madison Avenue and Twenty-ninth Street already had felt the influx of the new immigration. It was merely a question of time until enough families of the Presbyterian faith moved away to force the church to follow or die. The religious revival that accompanies the aftermath of every war helped to hide this fact; it was not until five years after the end of the Civil War that the recession was felt, but the following disintegration was swift.

Looking back, it is easy to see the mistake the church authorities made in their persistent attempts to keep the church going in unsound locations; however, no one can deny that they sincerely believed they acted for the good of the church.

Fortunately, several happenings occurred at this time to bring about a revival of the church. The Young Women's Christian Association was granted permission to hold Bible classes in the church until such time as it was sold. Dr. Robert Russell Booth, visiting the class one Sunday afternoon, was astonished to see over five hundred women attending. He felt that if such

a large gathering would attend a Bible class, the church could be revived. He united with the remaining members of the Session and the Board of Trustees in requesting permission from Presbytery to reopen the church. Permission was granted and the church held its first service in over a year in February 1886. Dr. Booth was installed as pastor on November 8th of that year.

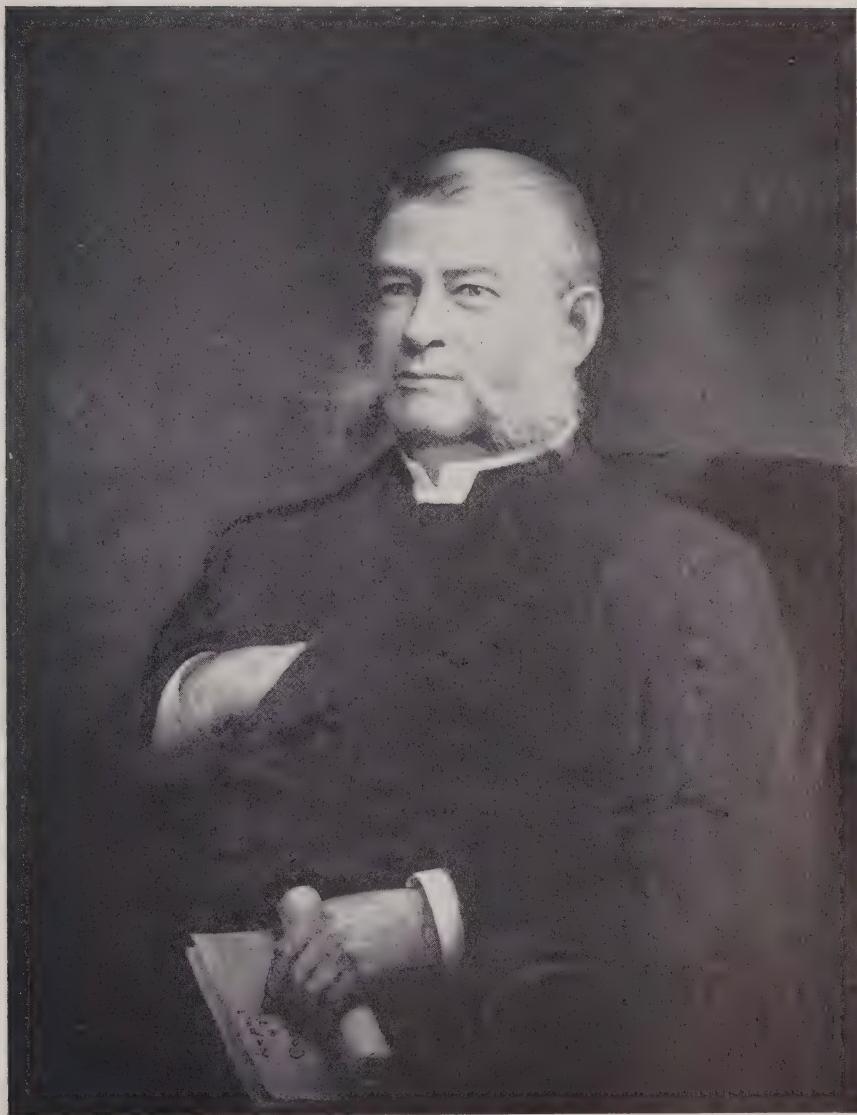
This effort, like those before it, was doomed to failure. It soon was obvious that the only hope of maintaining the church was to move it to a new location. At this time another fortunate happening occurred when the Church Extension Committee of the New York Presbytery, finding that a church was needed badly further uptown, proposed to the authorities of Rutgers Church that the property at Madison Avenue and Twenty-ninth Street be sold and several lots purchased at Broadway and Seventy-third Street. The understanding between the church officers and the Committee was that the funds remaining after the old building was sold and its debts cleared would be applied to the new church. Any excess expense was to be borne by the Church Extension Committee.

With this agreement, work quickly was started. The property was purchased, plans drawn up and construction of a chapel was begun. A serious obstacle had to be overcome when, in the middle of construction, it was found that the Church Extension Committee did not have sufficient funds to complete the undertaking. Dr. Booth, the church officers and members of the congregation finally raised enough money to finish the job.

The total cost, including the chapel and the purchase price of six lots, was almost \$140,000. The chapel when furnished accounted for \$26,000 of this sum, while the remainder of \$93,700 was paid for the ground on which it stood. The sale of the Madison Avenue property brought \$88,700, leaving a balance of \$51,000 to be made up. Of this amount \$48,000 was raised largely through Dr. Booth's efforts from friends of the church who were not members. The remaining \$2,600 was given by the Board of Trustees. The chapel was entirely clear of debt when it was opened for worship on September 23, 1888.

The last service was held in the Madison Avenue Church on February 12, 1888. From that date until the end of June services were conducted in Mr. T. F. Havermeyer's coach house on West Seventy-second Street. The chapel was formally dedicated on the ninth of October of that year.

The new location was an excellent one for the church. It was close to the north-south geographical center of Manhattan Island in a neighborhood that was beginning to develop rapidly. The church prospered from the very



FROM OIL PAINTING BY A. I. CANON, 1907

*Robert Russell Booth, D.D., LL.D.*

Pastor from 1886 to 1896.

Built the Rutgers Riverside Church on site where present church now stands.

first and at a meeting of the congregation on December 26, 1888, it was decided unanimously to proceed at once with the erection of the church proper.

On May 25, 1889, before a large group of spectators, among whom were many members of the General Assembly which was then in session in New York, the cornerstone of Rutgers Riverside Church was laid. The church was opened for worship on January 19, 1890, and dedicated eight days later with the Moderator of the New York Presbytery, Dr. R. F. Sample, officiating. The dedicatory sermon was preached by Dr. William Paxton of Princeton Seminary, and the prayer of dedication offered by Dr. William M. Worrall of the Thirteenth Street Church.

The new church building was approximately eighty by one hundred feet, seating some 800 persons, and was styled in the Romanesque order of architecture. The total cost, including the organ and furniture, was \$97,000. Of this sum \$20,000 was contributed by friends not connected with the church. An additional amount of \$25,000 was raised by the congregation, the ladies and the young people of the church. A \$50,000 mortgage on the building and property brought the totals into balance.

Dr. Robert Russell Booth, in his centennial discourse, gave much credit to Mr. Alexander Henderson, an elder and Sunday school superintendent, who labored diligently during the time that the Madison Avenue church was closed to have it reopened. This effort led directly to the removal of Rutgers to its present site.

Dr. Booth also credits Messrs. William K. Hinman, Allan Hay, Joseph Stuart, William M. Onderdonk, Robert Corning, Lawrence Hutton, Horace Metcalf, Asa Hull, W. Crittenden Adams and Dr. J. W. Warner as giving unstinting aid in the revival of the church.

Although Dr. Booth says little concerning himself, it is difficult to believe that Rutgers Church would have been reopened had he not entered whole-heartedly into the effort. He staked his future on a church that had been given up as lost by two other ministers, both able men. It is no detraction from the efforts of the others mentioned to say that his was the guiding hand that directed the energy into proper channels. During the ten years of Dr. Booth's ministry, from November 1, 1886, to January 31, 1896, the church fared well and although many other churches opened in the vicinity, Rutgers maintained its essential vigor.

On October 17, 1897, the Rev. Samuel McComb, of the Presbytery of

Belfast, Ireland, was installed as pastor. On May 15, 1898, just two days over a century after the first Rutgers Church was opened for worship, Dr. Booth, as Pastor Emeritus, delivered the centennial discourse already mentioned, in which he traced the progress of Rutgers Church throughout the one hundred years of its existence.

58 who be known to have by the name of the  
Presbyterian Episcopal Church - 171  
West 107th Street whereof we have been most affraid  
and desirous to stay until our friends will be  
there as I yell 583 Union & 112d Street - Second  
Churches 588 West 107th Street James  
Dwyer Esq<sup>r</sup> Stephen A. Douglas Mr. C. D.  
Cass and others a habitation we can not  
find the signatures were affixed City of New York  
first remembred that on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of May  
afforded before us various citizens whoe resided  
with that he was at a meeting of the Anti-Slavery  
Society Douglass H. Ward Mr. T. C. T. and  
speech a voluntary and publickly of his treatment  
by whom Douglass Garrison Mr. Wm. L. Chaplin Mr.  
John Brown and as witness to the same  
the 1<sup>st</sup> day in consequence whereof I directed the  
Mr. J. C. Hill Clerk

The officers present and their names

Received for and at the 1<sup>st</sup> day of June 1838  
Hudson Son Goldsmith the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of June 1838  
City and County of New York - We  
Abraham Son Goldsmith former and Councilman  
one of the Elders of the Presbyterian Episcopal Society  
in Rutgers Street in the City of New York do by this  
by the State persons of full age belonging to the  
Society to provide an Inspector and Surveyor Officer  
an election for Trustees thereof pursuant to an Act of  
the Legislature the State of New York entitled An Act

39 to provide for the incorporation of Religious Societies  
Present 37<sup>th</sup> March 1801 Do hereby certify that the said  
State persons of full age belonging to the said City  
having concurred in the most explicit and unanimous  
to the following at the City of New York in a place of meeting  
for public Worship on a day and year above mentioned  
day for saying in the name of our Lord Christ the next eight  
hundred and nine hundred & three thousand four hundred and  
sixty eight being the fifth day of March in the year of  
plenty of the world & to witness that we Henry  
Elder Esq; Emanuel Smith Samuel Seabord  
Worthington Jonathan Southam Conley  
James H. Steele Esq; Samuel Weyzel John  
Breckmen and Edward Gellatly And we  
do further certify that it was their unanimous  
wishes that the said day and hour of our  
meeting be after called and known by the name  
of "The meeting of the Religious Society  
which meets in Rutgers Street in the City of New York" All  
Witnesse whereof we have hereunto set our  
hands to the first day of April in the Year of our Lord  
One Thousand Eight hundred and nine The Senior  
Elder Esq; Emanuel Smith & Samuel Seabord  
Oath and seal in the presence of Dr. J. M. Wilson  
With Seal of New York and dated day of  
April in the year of our Lord the year of our  
Lord one thousand eight hundred and nine the said  
Emanuel Smith and George Weyzel do declare that  
they or either of them doth keep and observe  
the Sabbath Day according to the commandments  
of God and the law of Moses and the law of the  
Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments  
and doth observe and keep company with the Clergy

*The following is a transcription of the original Recorded papers of incorporation of the Presbyterian Church in Rutgers Street, shown in the reproduction on the preceding pages.*

Recorded for and at the request of Mr. Abraham Van Gelder Junr. this 2nd day of June 1809 City and County of New York ss. We Abraham Van Gelder Junior and Daniel Smith, two of the Elders of the Presbyterian Religious Society in Rutgers Street in the City of New York duly appointed by the Male persons of full age belonging to the said Society to preside as Inspectors and returning Officers of an Election for Trustees thereof pursuant to an Act of the Legislature the State of New York, entitled "An Act to provide for the Incorporation of Religious Societies" passed 27th March 1801 do hereby certify that the said two Male persons of full age belonging to the said Society having convened agreeably to the said Act and pursuant to the notice required thereby at their place of meeting for public Worship in Rutgers Street aforesaid, on the first day of May in the Year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and nine, upon the Votes of the said persons so assembled being taken the following persons were by a plurality of Votes elected to that office, to wit: HENRY RUTGERS, DANIEL SMITH, SAMUEL TORBERT, BENJAMIN THURSTON, JONATHAN COWDREY, JAMES McMASTERS, SAMUEL RUSSEL, JOHN BEEKMAN and EDWARD GILBERT. And We do further certify that it was then and there unanimously agreed that the said Trustees and their Successors should be hereafter called and known by the name and title of "The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Rutgers Street in the City of New York." In Witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals the first day of May in the Year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and nine. Abrm. Van Gelder (ss.) Daniel Smith (ss.) Sealed and Delivered in the presence of Thomas Waring, William Walker, State of New York ss. on the second day of June in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and nine before came Abraham Van Gelder Junior and Daniel Smith and they severally acknowledged that they executed the same. I do therfor allow the same to be recorded. AMBROSE SPENCER one of the Justices of the Supreme Court of Judicature the City of New York.

The aforesgoing examined and compared with the Original—

## Chapter V

With the dawn of the twentieth century began what might be called the modern period of Rutgers history. The church was well established and its leaders confident of the future. After a pastorate of three years the Rev. Samuel McComb tendered his resignation, to take effect in February 1900. In his statement, Mr. McComb said that his natural bent was toward academic learning, that he wished to continue his studies and felt that it would be unfair to devote less than his full time to the congregation's welfare.

The Rev. Mr. McComb was succeeded by Dr. Robert Mackenzie, who was installed as pastor on December 20, 1901. A study of the church membership records indicates that the number of communicants had dropped steadily, year by year, from 416 in 1896, the last full year of Dr. Booth's pastorate, to 313 in 1900. In 1901 the membership dropped to 303. With Dr. Mackenzie's advent the number increased to 339 in 1902 and continued upward until, by 1906, it had gone above 450 where it stayed for some time.

Besides a steadily increasing membership, Dr. Mackenzie's ministry was notable for many diverse activities by the congregation which indicated a healthy interest in the church. At a congregational meeting on November 18, 1903, it was decided to ask subscriptions to pay off the \$50,000 mortgage remaining on the church. On April 3 of the following year, Pastor-Emeritus Robert Russell Booth spoke from the pulpit to encourage the drive and subscribed \$1,000 to carry it forward. Mrs. Booth previously had given a similar amount. Thus far \$40,000 had been pledged.

An initial payment of \$20,000 was made on the mortgage in the summer of 1904 when pledges totaling that amount had been redeemed, and a second payment of \$10,000 in November of the same year. By January 23, 1905, \$41,000 had been paid, and another payment in November left only \$3,000 outstanding. By November 27, 1907, the mortgage had been paid off completely and Rutgers Church stood free and clear of all debt. It has maintained its debt-free status ever since.

Rutgers sponsored two missionaries to China in this period. Mr. and Mrs. Harrison K. Wright were maintained in Ningpo, China, through church collections, Mrs. Wright being the special charge of the women of Rutgers. In December 1904, a letter from Ningpo bore the unhappy tidings that Mrs. Wright had died. Mr. Wright continued his labors there.

During these years the church was closed every summer for one or two months while the pastor took his vacation. The congregation worshipped in a neighboring church while Rutgers was closed. When it reopened the other church closed and Rutgers was host to its congregation. This arrangement worked well and sometimes several churches in the area were included in the schedule. Among these churches were the Manhattan Congregational, St. Andrews Methodist Episcopal and the West End Collegiate Reformed. The last-named had what amounted to a permanent understanding with Rutgers in this matter for many years.

Dr. Robert Russell Booth, Pastor Emeritus of Rutgers Church for nine years, died at his home on November 23, 1905, ending twenty years of service to Rutgers and a lifetime of devotion to the cause of Presbyterianism in its broadest, most liberal phases. The funeral services were held in the church on November 27. In a commemorative minute placed in the Sessional records that day it was stated that Dr. Booth had been born on Dominick Street, New York City, in 1830. He had graduated from Auburn Theological Seminary in 1852. During his long lifetime he had held the posts of vice-president, trustee, and director of Princeton Theological Seminary, senior trustee of Williams College, director of Union Theological Seminary, and had been a chaplain of the Twenty-second Regiment, New York State Guard, for six years. He was a member of the Presbytery of New York, the American Tract Society and the Board of Foreign Missions. In 1895 his successful career was capped with one of the highest honors the Presbyterian Church can bestow when he was elected Moderator of the General Assembly.

It cannot be doubted that the entire congregation of Rutgers Church grieved deeply for the man who, more than any other individual, revived the church when it was far gone in decay. Besides the commemorative minute mentioned, a bronze tablet was erected in Dr. Booth's memory and unveiled on October 22, 1906, and on February 20, 1907, Scott Foster, clerk of Session, presented to the church an oil portrait of Dr. Booth. At the latter ceremony, many personal friends spoke of his excellent qualities and splendid record of achievement.

Mrs. Emma Louise Lathrop Booth, wife of the former pastor, died in January 1909. As part of her bequests she left \$2,000 to complete an endowment of \$5,000 for a bed in the Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. The Session of Rutgers Church was selected as custodians of the bed, with the power to use it for the good of Rutgers members. Later, this power was conferred upon the pastor and the clerk of Session.

In 1906 consolidation with the Fourth Avenue Presbyterian Church was

considered, so seriously, indeed, that several meetings of the Elders of the two churches were held, as well as a joint meeting of the Board of Trustees, Board of Deacons and the Session of Rutgers Church. No positive conclusion was reached, however, and the idea apparently was given up.

At the General Assembly of 1906, held in Des Moines, Iowa, Dr. Mackenzie was appointed chairman of a committee to help rebuild the churches of San Francisco which had been destroyed in the great earthquake and fire that occurred in April of that year. Dr. Mackenzie was in San Francisco to direct the work during June. A special collection amounting to \$3,385 was taken in Rutgers and sent to the First Presbyterian Church of San Francisco — Dr. Mackenzie's charge before coming to Rutgers — which had been hard hit by the catastrophe.

Perhaps it was this sojourn on the west coast that led to Dr. Mackenzie's letter to the congregation on March 10, 1909, in which he announced his desire to resign as pastor of Rutgers Church in order to take the post of president of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary located in San Francisco. Although they deeply regretted this eventuality, the congregation of Rutgers Church felt that Dr. Mackenzie was doing what he thought best, and therefore united with him in asking Presbytery to end his pastorate after eight years of constructive association.

The pulpit was declared vacant in June 1909, and the church was without a pastor for a year and a half. In the interim a committee from the congregation was appointed to search for a pastor. This committee traveled 34,000 miles to listen to various preachers and investigate their abilities, finally choosing Dr. William Hiram Foulkes, a young minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Portland, Oregon. The congregation concurred with the committee in its choice and Dr. Foulkes became pastor of Rutgers Church on April 27, 1911.

Dr. Foulkes came to Rutgers highly recommended and with an impressive record. There is little doubt that the church would have prospered under his guiding hand, but his pastorate was a short one, ending a year and a half after it had begun. Dr. Foulkes resigned on November 15, 1912, to become secretary of the Federated Boards of Ministerial Relief and Sustentation of the Presbyterian Church. Once again Rutgers was without a minister.

*The success of any man's Christian life depends upon his linking it with the lives of others in a kindred fellowship, an intimacy which is first created, then enhanced as the group seeks to work out a spiritual ideal—  
together.*

From "Meditations for Men" by  
DANIEL RUSSELL, D.D.



*Daniel Russell, D.D.*

Pastor from 1915 to 1943.  
Built the present church and church house.

*Our best tribute to loved ones vanished from  
our sight is not our tears but our emulation of  
their virtues. The finest thing we can do for  
them is to make their best ideals come true.*

From "Meditations for Men" by  
**DANIEL RUSSELL, D.D.**

## Chapter VI

The church continued without a spiritual leader for two and a half years, steadily losing ground in numbers and interests. Then, at a congregational meeting in the church on May 5, 1915, the name of Daniel Russell, D.D., pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Irvington, New York, was proposed. He was unanimously elected and, after accepting the call, was installed on November 21, 1915, the beginning of a long and profitable pastorate for Rutgers Church.

Some of the details of the installation of the new pastor may prove interesting and so are included here. Dr. Anthony H. Evans, Moderator of the Presbytery of New York, presided and offered the invocation. The Scripture reading was by the Rev. Charles A. Stoddard, D.D., a steadfast champion of Rutgers Church and Moderator of its Session throughout its several periods without a minister. Dr. Robert Mackenzie, former pastor of Rutgers Church, gave the charge to Dr. Russell, and Dr. William P. Merrill, minister of the Brick Presbyterian Church, gave the charge to the people. The sermon was by Dr. Arthur Judson Brown, secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, and the prayer of installation by the Rev. Richard C. Morse.

Dr. Russell's dynamic nature was felt immediately in the church. One of his first acts was to reorganize drastically the standing committees of Session. The nine or ten committees were cut to five, with each one representing two or three overlapping groups telescoped into one. Typical of Dr. Russell's breadth of view was a new committee on civic conditions he created, to "(a) consider in cooperation with the Board of Deacons questions of law infraction and public morals within the bounds of the parish; (b) take cognizance, so far as may be wise and proper, of political conditions within the city." Here was a minister who believed that merely taking a negative attitude toward bad civic conditions was not enough; action was necessary. Dr. Russell, as leader of a body of people who professed faith in the divine spark in all humanity, was ever ready to challenge precedent in the people's interest.

The new feeling extended itself throughout the church organizations, and with a wholesome effect. At this time particularly, when the war clouds which had blotted out much of Europe's positive Christianity threatened to cover the United States, every unequivocal action against the spreading darkness carried double importance.

**RUTGERS MEMBERS WHO SERVED IN THE ARMED FORCES  
IN WORLD WAR I**

Edward S. Barnes	Samuel McKee, Jr.
George Barrett	Robert C. McCorkle
Harold Blackburn	James A. Mercando*
Godfrey L. Carden	Herbert L. Miles
Gilbert Colgate, Jr.	Frederick M. Miller
William F. Dark	Robert F. Nathan, Jr.
George F. Dewey	Carlton T. O'Neil
William Glass*	Albert Picceotti
William S. Grant	Askel E. Reinhardt
Louis E. Greenwald	Charles N. Reinhardt
John A. Gustavson	Charles A. Rose
Jean Haddock	Stanley M. Rumbough
Malvina A. Herr	James W. Salemme
Leroy K. Howe	Lloyd Sears
Olive S. Judson	Kenneth Sears
Samuel J. Keator	Harold Sergenian
James S. Kellard	King Smith
William M. Kinkaid	Jean Stanton
Samuel C. Lattor	Robert B. Stanton, Jr.
Herbert Lawrence	Rush Taggart, Jr.
Henry J. Lowe	Thomas Tharburn
Anthony Magnano	Stuart W. Whiteside
Frank B. McKee	

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\* Killed in Action

When America entered the war, Rutgers Church contributed to the total effort in every way open to it. Rutgers members served in the Army and Navy, the Women's Guild became an auxiliary unit of the American Red Cross, the other church groups engaged in some form of activity directly or indirectly related to the war, and the regular work of the church was carried on with unremitting zeal.

Shortly before the armistice in 1918, Dr. Russell submitted to the church officers a drawing for a bronze tablet to be inscribed with the names of Rutgers members in the services. This tablet, originally placed in the entrance to the old church, may still be seen on the vestibule wall of the present edifice.

During these years, Rutgers' choir was gaining distinction as one of the finest in the city. Before 1915 the music department had languished, but with Dr. Russell's advent it took new hold. Edward Shippen Barnes, who was the organist and choir director in this period, was given a thirteen-voice choir which was expanded gradually to twenty-four voices.

Under Mr. Barnes' capable instruction, this choir became known throughout the city for the quality of its music. Besides singing at the church, the choir performed at other places in the city; it gave a concert of sacred music at Washington Irving High School, for example, and sang for the immigrants at Ellis Island.

Mr. Barnes left Rutgers in 1926, after eleven years service, to accept a post with St. Stephen's Church in Philadelphia. His place was taken by Charles Henry Doersam, who continued to maintain the choir's reputation until the summer of 1942, when he died.

Mr. Doersam's death was mourned by many outside the church as well as within. He had risen high in the esteem of all who knew him and his musicianship had gained favor with the finest musical circles in the City.

Charles A. Baker, the present organist and choir director, took Mr. Doersam's place and soon made his ability known. His mastery of technique has continued to win acclaim for Rutgers' music department and has added immeasurably to the beauty of the services. The present quartet, Barbara Troxell, Winifred Heidt, Steel Jamison and William McCully, under Mr. Baker's direction have continued the traditional excellence of Rutgers' music.

Sometime before 1918, Rutgers' connection with the Italian Mission was established. The Mission was located at 300 West 69th Street and was an extension of the Waldensian Church of Italy. Of the many Rutgers members who helped with the Mission work perhaps the foremost was Mrs. Gilbert Colgate, who was deeply interested in the Waldensian movement.

Most of the Mission's members were drawn from what was at that time

an Italian district, in the West Sixties. As this section gradually changed the Mission lost its members and eventually closed. The members who remained held weekly meetings and services in the new Rutgers church house under the direction of Mrs. Rosetta Natali, and were included in a special department of the Sunday school. Finally even these meetings were discontinued after Easter Sunday 1926, when they were no longer attended by enough members to make them worth while.

When the war was over, the church settled down to work that was, perhaps more prosaic, but just as important as its wartime efforts. On April 7, 1919, a payment of \$5,000 was made to endow a second bed in Presbyterian Hospital, this to be known as the Rutgers Presbyterian Church Endowed Bed. As with the Robert Russell Booth Endowed Bed, the Clerk of Session was assigned the power of nominating its occupants. These two endowed beds have been the instruments for the relief of hundreds of sick men and women.

In 1920 a newly-organized Christian Endeavor Society made good progress toward establishing itself. It was not the first such society in the church. In fact, it was given what funds were left when a preceding group dissolved. The new organization prospered and grew and was a feature of Rutgers' church life for some time.

The one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of Rutgers Church was held in November of 1921 because of Dr. Russell's belief that the church had been founded in 1796. This error persisted until after the present church was built, in fact its cornerstone was inscribed with this date and bears the legend still. While Dr. Russell may have had what he considered at the time adequate proof of the church's establishment in 1796, his reasons are unknown at present. Furthermore, at a later date he concurred with other church historians in accepting 1798 as the date of the formal beginning of the Church.

Rutgers Church sustained a grievous loss on January 26, 1922, when Scott Foster, a mainstay of the church, died at his home at the age of eighty-five. In searching through the annals of an institution which has existed for a century and a half it is inevitable that one should come across the records of many members whose contributions to its survival are outstanding. Among these records in the history of Rutgers Church none is more distinguished than that of Mr. Foster and his family. A mere iteration of the dry facts concerning them cannot do justice to their absorbing interest in the welfare of Rutgers, but it may serve to point out that they were ever willing to assume responsibility for the prosperity of the church.

On February 10, 1892, Mr. and Mrs. Scott Foster and their children, Jane G., Eugene Gray, Howard and J. Hegeman Foster, united with Rutgers Church by letter from the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church. On February 10, 1893, Scott Foster was elected an elder and on December 6, 1893, was designated Clerk of Session, which office he filled most ably for twenty-six years. Eugene Foster was elected a trustee on December 8, 1925, and served as chairman of the Board until his death on July 16, 1938. J. Hegeman Foster was elected a deacon in 1903 and an elder in 1905 after being relieved upon request from active duty as a deacon. At this writing he still serves as treasurer of Session. Jane G. Foster became interested in working with the young women of the church and continued in this effort for many years.

The Silver Cross in the chancel of the church was placed there in memory of Eugene Gray Foster. In commenting upon their contribution, Dr. Russell once observed: "At no time was any member of the Foster family called upon for a service which was not rendered efficiently and in a modest and unassuming manner." A testimonial dinner in honor of J. Hegeman Foster was given by the members of the church on December 8, 1944, in a spontaneous outpouring of affection and appreciation for his long years of unstinting service.

The history of our church is filled with the deeds of such loyal and diligent communicants. They are proof positive of the spirit which has kept it a living church for a hundred and fifty years and promises for it a vigorous future.

Preliminary moves toward the erection of a new church building were begun on July 11, 1923, when a committee composed of Henry D. Brewster, Clarence O. Bigelow, Gilbert Colgate, Thornton Earle, William Wilson Kelchner and J. Hegeman Foster was appointed, and advised ex-officio by Dr. Russell, to open negotiations with the United States Mortgage and Trust Company. The tentative lease and contract were approved December 19, 1923, at a congregational meeting and endorsed by Presbytery the same month. By the terms of the contract, the Trust Company was entitled to use the property at Broadway and Seventy-third Street for twenty-five years, after which the property would revert to the church. In return for this consideration, the lessees were to pay the costs of demolishing the old structure and erecting a new church and church house on Seventy-third Street.

During the year that the church was under construction, from the fall of 1924 to the fall of 1925, the congregation, upon invitation, worshipped with the congregation of the West End Collegiate Reformed Church. Dr. Henry Evertson Cobb, pastor of that church, and Dr. Russell officiated jointly or separately at these services. That these arrangements were beneficial to both

bodies is apparent from the commendatory letters exchanged between the Consistory of the Collegiate Church and the Session of Rutgers after the new church was in use.

The cornerstone of the new church was laid on February 14, 1925. Dedication ceremonies were held March 21, 1926, climaxing a week of commemorative events at which addresses were delivered by the Rev. Stephen S. Wise, Rabbi of the Free Synagogue; George V. McLaughlin, New York Police Commissioner; Walter T. Diack, General Secretary of the New York YMCA and, from the Presbytery of New York, the Rev. Henry Natch Furnald, Rev. George M. Duff, Rev. William Y. Duncan, Rev. Edmund B. Chaffee and Rev. Theodore F. Savage.

At the dedicatory services, the sermon was preached by Charles R. Erdman, D.D., LL.D., Moderator of the General Assembly. The prayer of consecration was offered by the Rev. Harlan G. Mendenhall, Stated Clerk of Presbytery, and the invocation by Dr. Russell.

The present church and church house, substantially unchanged since their erection, are located on the south side of West Seventy-third Street with a total frontage of seventy-seven feet, the church depth being one hundred and two feet, two inches. The buildings were designed in the Gothic style by Henry Otis Chapman, architect.

These buildings were constructed solidly and meant to last. Barring a cataclysm of great magnitude, Rutgers communicants can be certain that the church buildings will be there as long as there is a congregation to require them.

## Chapter VII

As we take up the story at this point, we find that Rutgers Church in 1925 was in excellent condition. Alive to its spiritual responsibilities, financially solvent, with a large congregation and a competent minister, it was in a position to look ahead to a bright future.

The economic upheaval that occurred in 1929 and depressed the living conditions of the country for a decade had little permanent effect on the financial footing of the church. Income and expenditures remained comparatively stable throughout the depression. Indeed, in 1932 Rutgers contributed \$520 for Emergency Unemployment Relief.

Not so stable, however, was the church membership. Dr. Russell told the church officers in 1933 that the attendance at Wednesday and Sunday evening services had been falling off. It was his belief, he said, that it was not due to a lack of interest but because so many members were moving out to Long Island. He also attributed part of the cause to the changing habits of the members.

This was a trouble which struck at the very heart of Rutgers' life. It was not a new development; twice before the same affliction had almost put an end to the church. But whereas in 1862 and 1889 the problem was solved by moving the church after the parishioners, in 1933 such a solution was impossible. The members were too widely scattered.

Fortunately, certain circumstances had changed in the fifty years since the problem was last faced by the church officers. In the 1880's there was no rapid transit in the city, nor had the gasoline engine been invented. In the 1930's both the automobile and the subway helped to preserve Rutgers' standing. Members who had moved away found that they could attend services by traveling a half hour in a train or an automobile. That many of them did so is evident from the membership figures, but enough communicants dropped out to pose a continual threat to the church's existence. In 1933 there were 144 members suspended because of continued absence; 165 absentees were dropped from the rolls in 1939.

There is little doubt that the church would have made up these losses eventually, but the potential danger was grave enough to add weight to a proposed merger with the Harlem-New York Church, which was under consideration in 1941. It was in October of that year when negotiations between

the two churches were initiated. Dr. Russell and Elders Harry Dorsett Smith and Clark E. Wood represented Rutgers at preliminary conferences with a similar committee consisting of Dr. Ralph W. Key, pastor, Walter B. Chapin and Andrew L. Merz from Harlem-New York.

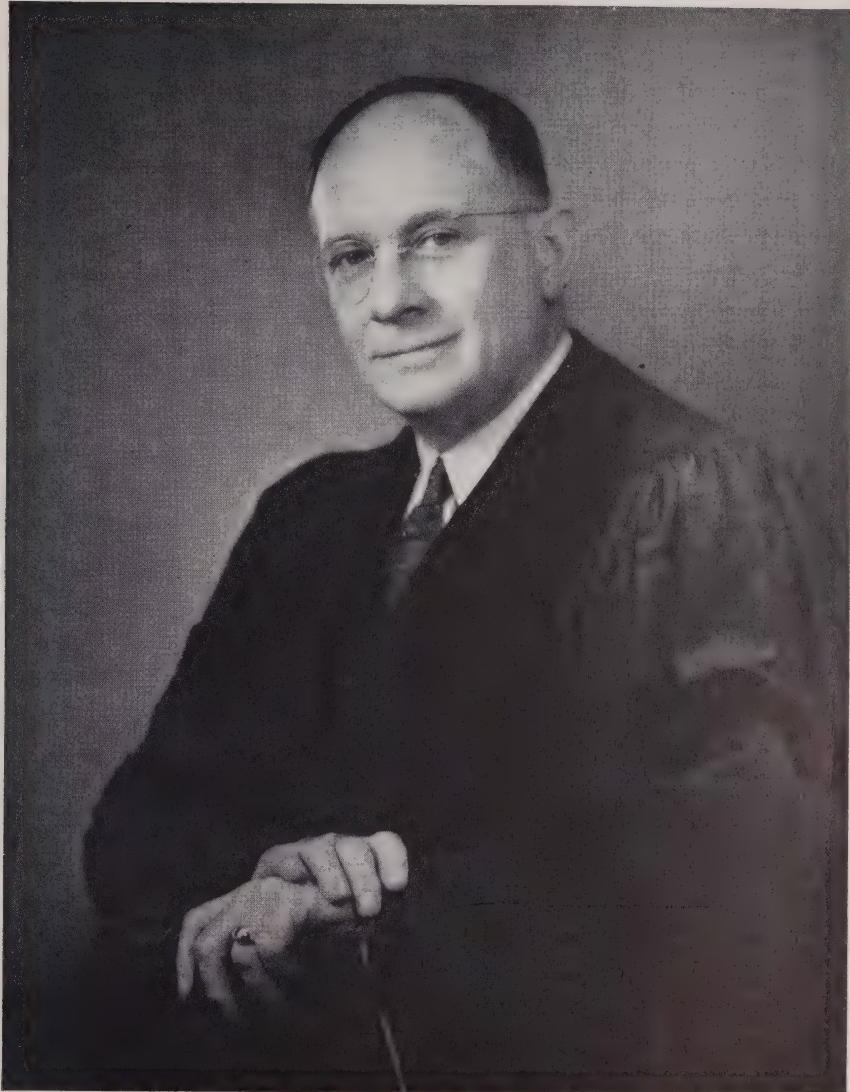
When all details of the merger had been settled subject to the approval of the two congregations and Presbytery, a special meeting of the congregation of Rutgers Church was called for January 28, 1942. Dr. Theodore F. Savage acted as moderator, and elder Charles V. Erickson as clerk. Elder Smith, chairman of the merger committee, read and explained the basis of agreement arrived at by the official boards of both organizations.

After some discussion and a minor change in the wording of one proposal, the union of the two churches was approved unanimously and a call was extended to Dr. Ralph W. Key, pastor of the Harlem-New York Church, to become co-pastor of Rutgers. Elders Smith and Wood were appointed to prosecute the call before Presbytery. All the church officers present and two long-time Rutgers members, Mrs. Clark B. Hotchkiss, and Miss Lucy Stoddard, signed the call.

Presbytery approved the union without a dissenting voice on February 8, 1942, and placed the pastoral call in Dr. Key's hands. He accepted and was installed with fitting ceremonies on March 1 following. Dr. Daniel Russell presided and asked the constitutional questions. The invocation was offered by the Rev. Maitland Bartlett, stated clerk of Presbytery and the scripture was read by Dr. Edgar F. Romig. Dr. Paul F. Barackman delivered the sermon and the prayer of installation was offered by Dr. Horace F. Martin. The charge to the pastor was given by J. LeRoy Dodds, and to the people by Dr. Benjamin F. Farber. Dr. Key pronounced the benediction.

Thus the two churches were united. As specified by the terms of the agreement, the Session of the Harlem-New York Church was incorporated into the Session of Rutgers. All organizations of like natures in the two churches were integrated. This was the last action taken wherein the two churches were mentioned separately. Following this there was but one church — Rutgers. At a congregational meeting held on June 9, 1943, both ministers offered their resignations. Dr. Russell's was accepted with regret and his status as Pastor-Emeritus was approved. Dr. Key's resignation was refused unanimously and he continued as pastor of Rutgers Church.

Long before these matters had been concluded the United States had been plunged into World War II. Neither the merger negotiations nor subsequent business prevented Rutgers Church from taking positive steps in regard to the war effort. The most important contribution of the church was made,



*Ralph William Key, Th.D.*

Pastor from 1932 to 1948 including ten years service with Harlem-New York  
Church prior to merger with Rutgers.

*RUTGERS MEMBERS WHO SERVED IN THE ARMED FORCES  
IN WORLD WAR II*

Thomas Adler	Robert Hilliard*
Robert Azud	Robert Kaiser
George Baker	William Kaiser
John G. Baumgarth	Arie Kossen
Charles Bellin	Nicholas Kovarco
Edward Benson	Ferdinand Kunkler
George Blomquist	John Leers
Ernest Brandl	Don MacInnis
Henry Brandl	Alfonso Maltese
Henry G. Burley	Mary Manzano (Veasey)
William Louis Cervantes*	Arthur Mauer
James W. Chapman	David Mayne
William Cody	Alice Ogren
Ernest DeFrain	William Plumer
Harry Diven	John Powell
Daniel Dunlap	Russell Respol
Walter C. Eberhard	Michael Rinko
Robert Entwistle	William B. Robb
Ellis Erickson	Maurice Rostan
Robert McK. Etherington	Edward Schaefer
Sandford G. Etherington, Jr.	Clinton P. Stephens
Robert Fletcher	Henry Stephens
Louis Flores	Warren A. Stephens
Herbert Franzreb	John Stewart
Robert Gibson	Frank C. Thomson
Charles Graf	Steve Ujvarosy
George Green	John VandenBroek
Paul A. Grupp	William A. Vensel
Joseph Guntz	Robert Wirtz
Michael Hamolko	Theodore Witt
Ralph Hancock	Robert Wood
James Heath	Wallace Wood

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\* Killed In Action

of course, by those members whose service in the armed forces exposed them to war's myriad dangers — moral, mental and physical. The manner in which they met the challenge did much to renew the faith and fervor of those who remained at home.

The wartime role played by Rutgers members in uniform is a stirring chapter in the church's history but, unfortunately, too long and complex to be detailed here. It dwarfs the part taken in the conflict by the civilian members of the church, and yet the latter were constantly seeking to serve in whatever capacity they might be useful. Before the actual declaration of war, when the actions of the Axis powers presaged the coming encounter, Rutgers church house was opened for the use of such civic groups as might need space for activities incident to war work.

All through the war, Rutgers servicemen in the far lands of the earth looked forward with pleasure to each copy of "Rutgers Servicemen's Victory Paper," which carried news of the church and letters from members in service. "R.S.V.P." was published by a group of young people in the church who gave freely of their time and efforts.

The Presbyterian War Emergency Fund and the Wartime Service Fund were aided by collections and contributions taken in Rutgers Church. All through D-Day, that day when the armies of Great Britain and the United States stormed the shores of France, the church remained open for public prayer. Special services were held to mark the cessation of hostilities.

With the ending of the Second World War new problems and new opportunities have arisen for the church. Vicissitudes of religious values occurred frequently in the pressure of conflict; for many the values are still fluctuating. Minds are groping for spiritual light. Some have turned to the church for guidance, others have turned away. The general movement, however, appears to be toward a revival of belief in those rocklike principles upon which the church is founded. Rutgers is faced with the problems inherent in furthering and enhancing this renewal of religious belief and the opportunity of sharing in it. Since this action is still taking place some future historian of the church will have to record its outcome.

Soon after the war's end, the church officers busied themselves with a task more pleasant than many they had undertaken in recent years, namely, the planning of a program to celebrate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the church. On January 30, 1946, a Sesqui-Centennial Directorate was set up to prepare and arrange for suitable ceremonies in May 1948.

This group of people has worked without stint for more than two years to make the Sesqui-Centennial celebration of Rutgers Church an occasion filled

with memorable and pleasant events. Among their achievements has been that of securing as one of the speakers Wilbur LaRoe, Jr., of the Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church, Chevy Chase, Maryland. Mr. LaRoe is Moderator of the General Assembly and his speaking during the Sesqui-Centennial celebration marks the second time that a Moderator of General Assembly has visited the church during an historic occasion, the first being the dedication of the present structure on March 21, 1926.

We now have come almost to the end of our journey through time. But the records hold one more fact — the unhappy circumstance of Dr. Russell's death on February 10th, 1947. Dr. Russell at the time of his death was seventy-three years old.

Dr. Daniel Russell stands on a plane with Dr. Krebs and Dr. Booth as one of the men whose desires and abilities carried to great heights the work of Rutgers Church. By the unshakable Christian qualities of his character and the magnetic force of his personality he influenced his people no less than by his power of oratory. The officers and congregation of Rutgers expressed their sense of loss in a memorial brochure issued after the obsequies of the late Pastor-Emeritus, which were held on February 12, 1947.

With the recording of these last sad facts we reach our destination — the present. Now that the recounting of the one hundred and fifty year history of Rutgers Church is complete, the reader may form an overall picture of its past achievements and present status, and perhaps project for himself an idea of its future. Insofar as can be judged at this time, the church is sound, spiritually and financially. Its leadership is fully competent and inspired by those ideals of Christian service which underlie Presbyterian polity; its organizations are active, and its membership, while susceptible of enlargement, is interested in, and can be relied upon to perform zealously, those tasks necessary to continue and extend the good influences of the church.\*

Although many Rutgers communicants have removed from the city and more presumably will do so in the future, it is to be hoped that the church will remain the center of their religious activities. It is to be hoped further that

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\*Just a week after the text for this book was sent to the printer, Dr. Key stated that he had received a unanimous call to the pastorate of the First Presbyterian Church of Bridgeport, Connecticut and after careful consideration he felt constrained to request Presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relation existing between himself and the Church in order that he might accept the call. Therefore, after due and proper notice the Session called a meeting of the congregation for Sunday morning, March 7th, to take action on this request.

With sincere regret the congregation voted to join Dr. Key in his request to Presbytery; the dissolution to become effective April 15, 1948. Dating from the

each member will strive continually to reinvigorate the church with new members, the best insurance against the drying up of ideas and withering of enthusiasm that leads to ultimate destruction.

In the century and a half since it was founded, Rutgers Church has survived several ailments, any one of which easily could have ended in its extinction. Through Divine favor it regained a healthy standing each time by means of an inspired leadership and determined following. Surely, with good will and concerted action by all its members and leaders, under the direction of God, Rutgers Church may look forward to a limitless future, continuing to fulfill as in the past, the prophecy in Dr. Rodgers' sermon in May 1798:

*"And I will fill this house with glory . . ."*

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time Dr. Key accepted the call to Harlem-New York Church and including his years with Rutgers Church, his postorate with this congregation has lasted for 16 years.

Dr. Key's resignation was announced at the regular morning service, Sunday, February 29th, 1948, after which the TRIBUTE printed on page 54 was read by one of the elders.

## A TRIBUTE

TO

*Dr. and Mrs. Ralph W. Key*

By CLARK E. WOOD

There is much that could be said in commendation of your work as Pastor of this Church in the years that have passed. However, this is neither the time nor the place to look in retrospect. When that time comes, as it surely will, we hope to have something to say. You both are held in an affection that would be difficult to equal. You have baptized our children, you have married our young people, you have buried our dead; our joys have been yours to share, our burdens and sorrows have been brought to you for alleviation. A service of this kind cannot be rendered for a period of sixteen years without a deep sense of loss prevailing as the time comes for you to depart.

Nevertheless, the burden on our hearts is lightened as, glistening through the mist that tends to cloud our vision, we see that wider field of service to which you are dedicating your lives. With a unanimity that is complete we pray that the Master whom we all try to serve shall abide with you and that God shall abundantly prosper both your work and that of the church to which you are called.

It can truly be said you have been faithful with the few; you shall have authority over the many.

May God bless you both.

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See footnote on page 52.

*List of Pastors*

## PASTORS OF THE COLLEGIATE CHURCHES

- \*John Rodgers, D.D., 1765-1811
- \*James Wilson of Scotland, 1785-1788
- \*John McKnight, D.D., 1789-1809
- \*Samuel Miller, D.D., LL.D., 1793-1813
- \*Philip Milledoler, D.D., 1805-1809

PASTORS OF THE RUTGERS STREET CHURCH AND ITS SUCCESSORS,  
FROM ITS INCORPORATION IN 1809 TO THE PRESENT

- \*Philip Milledoler, D.D., 1809-1813
- Alexander McClelland, D.D., 1815-1821
- \*Thomas McAuley, D.D., LL.D., 1822-1827
- \*John M. Krebs, D.D., 1830-1867
- Nathaniel W. Conkling, D.D., 1868-1881
- William Stephenson, 1881-1884
- \*Robert R. Booth, D.D., LL.D., 1886-1896
- Samuel McComb, M.A., 1897-1900
- Robert Mackenzie, D.D., 1901-1909
- William H. Foulkes, D.D., 1911-1912
- Daniel Russell, D.D., 1915-1943
- Ralph W. Key, Th.D., 1942-1948

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\* Indicates pastors who have been Moderators of the General Assembly.

### *List of Elders*

The following Ruling Elders were set apart to the Rutgers Street Church on the separation of the United Presbyterian Churches of New York:

1809	Henry Rutgers Abram Van Gelder, Jr. James McMaster Samuel Torbert	Benjamin Thurston Ephraim Brasher Daniel Smith John Beekman
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The following have since been ordained, or installed when previously ordained elsewhere:

1814	Apollos Wetmore Epenetus Smith	Strong Sturges John R. Cowperthwaite
1819	Eli Benedict John Bremner	Benjamin Webb Gaius Fenn
1829	Samuel G. Wheeler William Woodhull	Jeremiah Vanderbilt Jared B. Peck
1833	Stephen C. Lynes Samuel H. Miller	John Conger Ebenezer Platt
1841	John Leveridge Jeremiah Skidmore	Thompson Price Isaac R. Noyes
		Robert S. Place
1852	John Conger† James H. Knapp	Edwin S. Belknap Charles S. Harmer
1859	David Conger Robert McMurray	Charles Roberts Thomas A. Smith
1867	Jasper Corning Allan Hay	R. J. Thorne
1880	Alexander Henderson	Robert Corning
1882	John W. Warner, M.D.	William M. Onderdonk
1886	George B. Hickok, M.D.	Asa Hull

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† Dismissed 1835, returned to the church in 1852.

*List of Elders—continued*

1888	David M. Stiger	William T. Booth William H. Parsons, Jr.
1889	William E. Magie	James W. Conrow
1892	Charles B. Hubbell	John J. Stevenson, LL.D.
1893	Charles A. Kinch, M.D.	Scott Foster
1903	Robert C. Dorsett	Thomas M. Stewart
1904	Gilbert Colgate	
1905	J. Hegeman Foster	Herbert N. Fell Seymour M. Ballard
1907	Robert Dickson	John H. Finley, LL.D. Lewis M. Silver, M.D.
1912	John P. Truesdell	
1918	William W. Kelchner	
1919	LeRoy Brewster	
1923	Romaine Pierson	Frederick R. Keator
1928	Norman P. Davis	Homer C. Croscup Harold M. Duryea
1933	Garibaldi Arrighi	Joseph S. Whiteside
1935	Guilliam B. Demarest	Charles V. Erickson
1937	Harry D. Smith	
1939	Clark E. Wood	Robert F. Gibson
1942	Arthur F. Allen	Walter B. Chapin
	George B. Dunscombe	Andrew L. Merz
	William Platt	Thomas B. Sharpe
		Frank Whorlow
1944	Franklin H. Senior	Howard B. Merz
1946	David Leister	Robert F. Wood
1947	Frank D. Parker	

*Always remember this, There is a strength and  
majesty in Truth that needs no help from  
violence.*

From St. Paul  
By DANIEL RUSSELL, D.D.

*Present Officers of Rutgers Church*

ELDERS

Franklin H. Senior, <i>Clerk of Session</i>	J. Hegeman Foster, <i>Treasurer</i>
Arthur F. Allen	Walter B. Chapin
George B. Dunscomb	Harold M. Duryea
David Leister	Howard B. Merz
Frank D. Parker	William Platt
Thomas B. Sharpe	Harry D. Smith
Frank Whorlow	Clark E. Wood
	Robert F. Wood

DEACONS

Milton R. O'Connor, <i>President</i>	Wright F. Emery, <i>Treasurer</i>
	Blanche Davoll, <i>Secretary</i>
Mrs. Peter Boat	Harold M. Duryea
Michael Hamolko	Harold G. Hill
Frank D. Parker	J. Russell Respol
	Frank C. Thomson

TRUSTEES

Sandford G. Etherington, <i>Chairman</i>	Albert G. MacInnis, <i>Treasurer</i>
	Walter B. Chapin, <i>Secretary</i>
Marshall H. Duryea	Steel Jamison
Archibald F. Mathers	William J. Nimmons
Milton R. O'Connor	William L. Person

*Sesqui-Centennial Commission*

*Ex-officio* Dr. Ralph W. Key

*Honorary Chairman* J. Hegeman Foster

*Honorary Vice Chairmen* Lucy Stoddard

Marshall H. Duryea

*Executive Director* Clark E. Wood

*Assistant Director* Franklin H. Senior

*Director of Advisory Board* Sandford G. Etherington

*Advisory Board*

Walter B. Chapin Marion W. Jamison

Harold M. Duryea Albert G. MacInnis

Archibald F. Mathers

*Director of Finance* Robert F. Wood

*Director of Programs* Mildred B. MacInnis

*Director of Publicity* Wright F. Emery

*Acknowledgment*

The history of Rutgers Presbyterian Church could not have covered the subject completely were it not for the assistance given by the following persons:

Ralph W. Key

J. Hegeman Foster

Marion W. Jamison

Mildred B. MacInnis

Theodore F. Savage

Lucy Stoddard

Clark E. Wood

Two pamphlets written by Rutgers ministers also rendered invaluable aid. They are "A Centennial Discourse; The History of Rutgers Riverside Church" by Robert Russell Booth, D.D., LL.D., and an account of the present church building, by Daniel Russell, D.D.

To the above-named I acknowledge my indebtedness and voice my sincere gratitude.

DON BOGARDUS

## *Appendix*

### CHURCH BUILDINGS

The first Rutgers Street Church was opened for worship May 13, 1798.

The second Rutgers Street Church was opened for worship April 21, 1842.

Rutgers Church on Madison Avenue and Twenty-ninth Street was purchased and occupied April 16, 1863.

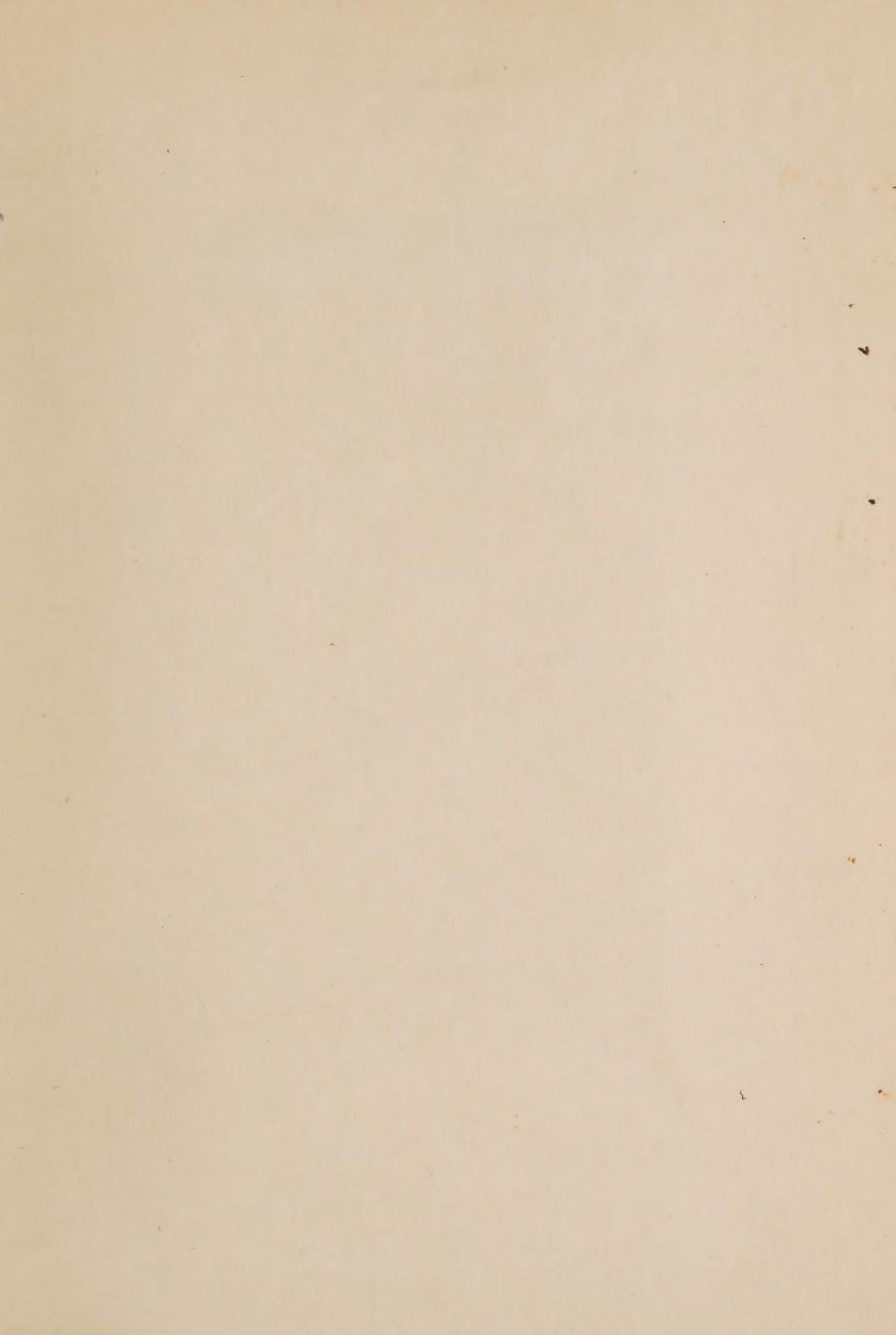
The second Rutgers Church on Madison Avenue opened for worship January 3, 1875.

Rutgers Riverside Church at Broadway and West Seventy-third Street opened January 19, 1890.

The present Rutgers Church opened for worship March 21, 1926.









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**Date Due**



